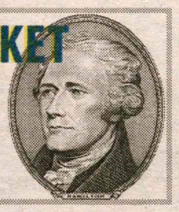
**CONCEALING CONSERVATISM**

For a view on the Hill's Republican voice, see **page 11**.

**ALUMNI ON THE TICKET**



Matt Cartwright '83 and Christie Vilsack K'72 run for Congress. See **page 4**.

**HOLLYWOOD & POLITICS**

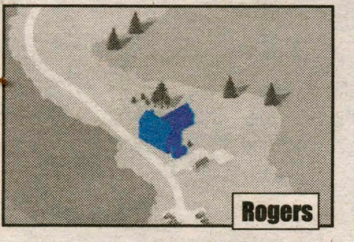
Should celebrities mix with government? See **page 8**.

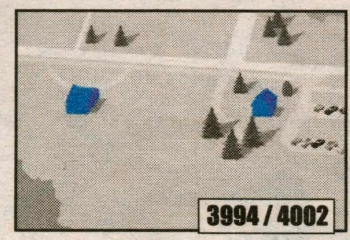
THE SPECTATOR

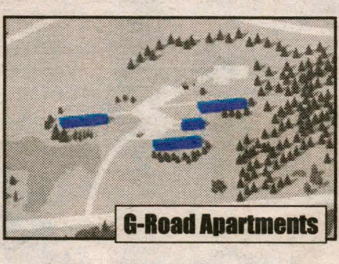
Thursday, November 1, 2012

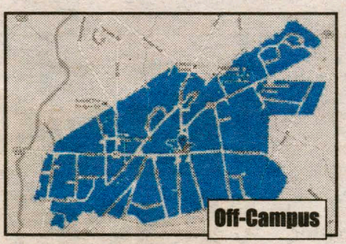
Volume LIII Number 8

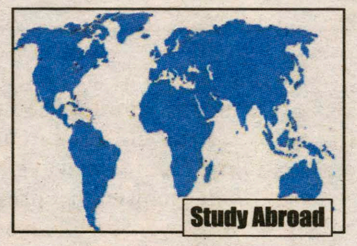
# OBAMA TAKES HAMILTON




**by Rachel Lieb '13**
*Editor-in-Chief*
**and Taylor Coe '13**
*Creative Director*

Didn't we see this one coming? After all, it's an old joke that all college campuses are liberal; Hamilton is no exception to the rule. Polling students, faculty and staff, we compiled three 'electoral college' maps of the campus hoping to tease out relationships between those who either work for, teach at or attend Hamilton and the spectrum of voting choices this election.

We have affiliated dorms and buildings on campus with political parties—blue for Democrats, red for Republicans and green for 'other'—based on the votes we received from a poll we sent to the community last week. The votes by no means reflected the actual population on campus. 521 students, or 28.3% of the total student body responded, 49 professors or 21.1% of faculty responded and a mere 88 of the 434 staff members and administrators, or 20.2%, responded to the poll, sent via e-mail and posted on various *Spectator* staffers' Facebook pages. Maps that represent the faculty and staff electoral distribution can be found on page two.

Particular dorms and departments had much better response rates than others. Babbitt Hall had the most residents participate in the poll, with 45% responding. Sixty of Babbitt's 160 residents voted for President Obama, seven for Governor Romney and five chose the 'other' option.

The Anderson-Connell Alumni Center had the greatest participation in the staff and administrator category, with 20 people voting. Though they have the largest portion of faculty offices, the Kirner-Johnson building had the highest number of participants with 13 faculty members responding.

However, just like the real electoral map, our three maps of campus do not tell the whole story: there are votes (and voters) that have disappeared. For most of the solid-colored buildings you see on these maps, there are votes for other candidates that the majority has swallowed up. Many of the votes not reflected on the maps are Republican. For further thoughts on the imbalance of political opinion on the campus (in startling contrast to national polling numbers), see the opinion article on page 11 by Kayla Safran '13.

A secondary lesson lurking in the survey results is that of e-mail apathy. Hamilton students, faculty and staff receive a bulk amount of e-mail every day. The inbox of every Hamilton community member sees notices, meetings, lectures, events, warnings, memorandums, reminders and surveys, and these comprise merely the listserv e-mails, overlooking the personal e-mails that are shuffled in amongst the rest.

For campus-wide surveys, e-mail apathy is an expected threat; a survey will never receive anything even close to a 100% response rate.

In contrast with our survey, the CAB spring concert survey has received 1,017 responses so far, despite being sent out two days afterward.

"I think Hamilton's really apathetic," said William Rusche '13, president of the Hamilton College Democrats, in an article from the Sept. 20 issue of *The Spectator* in regard to politics on campus. With respect to these two surveys, Rusche seems to be correct.

The staff survey at right is interesting for a few reasons. Despite going for 'other' on the map, there were only three responses received from Physical Plant: two for 'other' and one for Romney/Ryan.

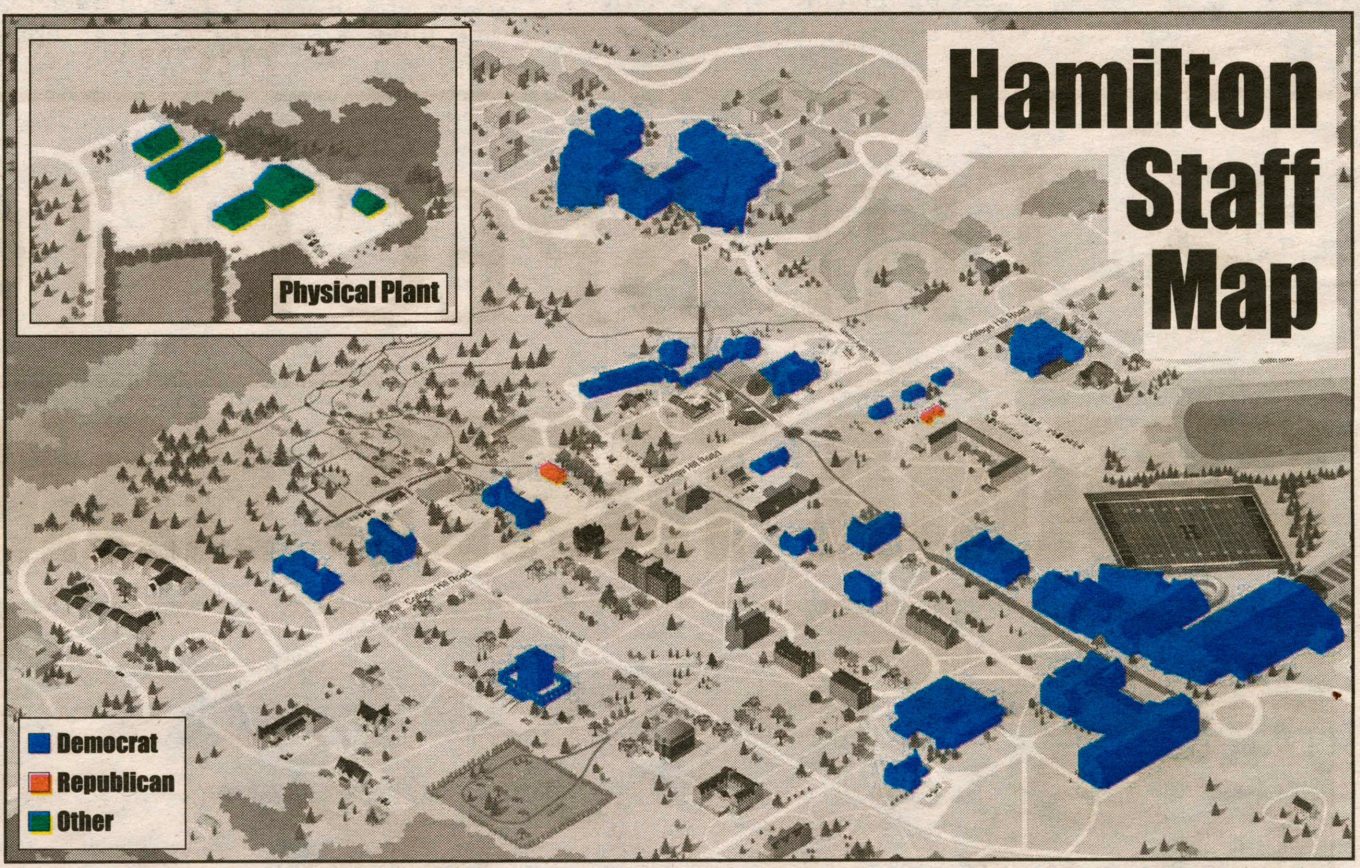
There are only two buildings on the staff map that went for Romney/Ryan, but, again, the numbers are misleading; only one vote from each was received.

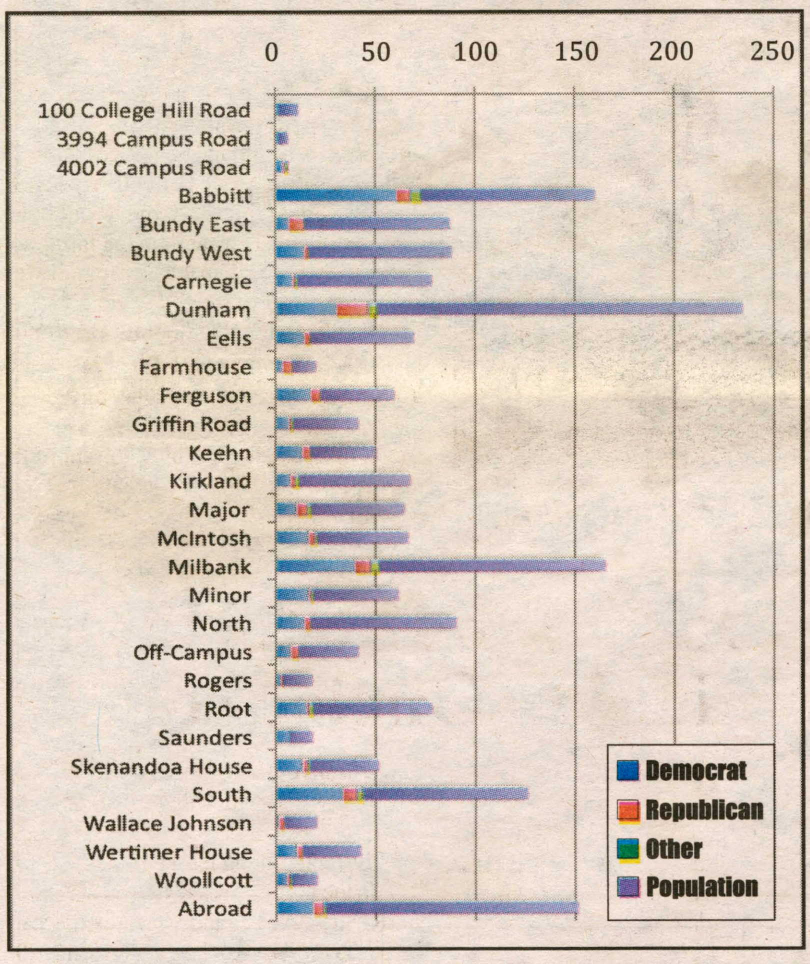
Of the 88 responses from staff, 66 were votes for Obama/Biden, 17 were voters for Romney/Ryan and 5 were votes for 'other.'

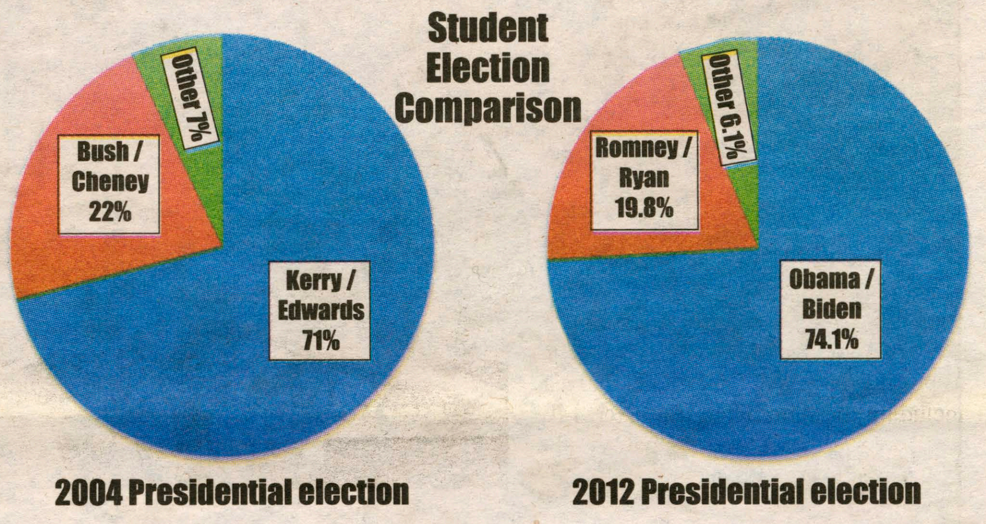
The high numbers for Obama among the College staff are surprising, given that this area of New York State has traditionally gone Republican in elections.

The position of Oneida County Executive has been in Republican hands since 1980, currently held by Anthony J. Picente, Jr. The Oneida County Board of Legislators is composed of 16 Republicans and 13 Democrats. Several representatives from Clinton, Utica, Rome and New Hartford are Republican.

Joseph Griffo, the state senator for District 47 in New York State, in which Clinton is located, is also a Republican.




The survey directly above, conducted by a Hamilton statistics class in 2004, demonstrates an uncanny similarity with the 2012 election survey, above right, conducted over the last week. (There was no available polling data from 2008).

Not only are the results so similar; the number of respondents is nearly the same. While we received 521 responses out 1,836 students, or approximately 28.4%, the survey in 2004 received 463 responses out of 1,814 students, or approximately 25.5%. Although it might look as if voter apathy has shifted over the past eight years, statistics would say otherwise. The difference in percentages, less than three percent, is negligible and can be considered the margin of error for a survey involving a random sample.

The survey results on the Hamilton campus correlate poorly with the national results. In 2004, the Republican ticket won with 286 electoral votes and 50.7% of the popular vote, differing by 28.7% from the Hamilton campus. The Democratic ticket lost with 251 electoral votes and 48.3% of the popular vote, differing by 22.7% from the Hamilton campus. Nader and other third-party candidates received 1% of the popular vote, compared to the 7% they received from Hamilton students.

No one should be surprised by the lack of red on the Hamilton faculty map. It's no secret that collegiate culture—especially the faculty—sways liberal.

Out of 49 faculty responses to the survey, 43 votes were for Obama/Biden, 5 were for Romney/Ryan and 1 was for 'other.'

In a study released five years ago by Neil Gross, an assistant professor of sociology at Harvard, and Solon Simmons, an assistant professor of sociology and conflict analysis at George Mason University, the stereotype was grounded in some real numbers.

Polling 1,417 full-time professors, Gross and Simmons found that 44.1% identified themselves as liberal, 46.1% as moderate and 9.2% as conservative.

In a similar survey by the *Washington Post*, 72% of the polled professors identified themselves as liberal and 15% as conservative. The survey also found that the divergence is even greater at so-called 'elite schools,' such as Hamilton, at which 87% of professors identify as liberal and only 13% as conservative.

# Student presidential debate focused on economy

by Katie Hee '14
*News Editor*

The state of the economy, health care and Obama's leadership capabilities were the focus of Saturday's student debate during Family Weekend, entitled, "Should Obama be reelected?"

Students and their families filled Bradford Auditorium in Kirner-Johnson to watch members of the Hamilton College Republicans and Democrats engage in debate. Sarah Larson '15, Brady Sprague '15 and Kayla Safran '13 represented the College Republicans. Will Rusche '13, Jack Cartwright '15 and Tracy Mazerolle '15 spoke for the College Democrats.

James S. Sherman Professor of Government Phil Klinkner, who moderated the debate, was unable to declare a winner.

Klinkner commented, "If you're a Republican, you probably thought the Republicans won. If you're a Democrat, you probably thought the Democrats won. I think that both sides could declare a victory."

The debate followed a traditional format beginning with opening statements and rebuttals, before turning to the audience for questions and ending with closing statements from the president of each organization.

Cartwright led with a review of what President Obama accomplished throughout his last term in office: "The past four years can be defined by one word: progress."

He continued to explain what he sees as positive effects of Obama's initiatives, including the Affordable Care Act, Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, ObamaCare, the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the nation's continued efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Republicans immediately countered and focused the debate on three issues: the economy, health care and the flaws in President Obama's leadership. Safran's opening statement discussed the country's current economic state, criticized Obama's leadership abilities as weak and cited health care as "a horrible mess."

The student debate mirrored those of the candidates with an emphasis on the state of the economy. The Democrats claimed that Obama has taken large strides to recover from the recession, while the Republicans maintain that Obama has not taken the necessary steps to decrease unemployment and reduce the federal deficit.

Mazerolle insisted that Obama was on the path to recovery. She noted that the United States has seen 31 straight months of job growth, insisting that "the economy is not something that can be turned around over night."

The Republicans criticized the steps Obama has taken, explaining that his policies have increased the federal deficit and his shaky leadership has decreased confidence in the private sector. Sprague advocated that a strong president would encourage reasonable spending, enact permanent tax cuts and create the confidence needed for private investment to flourish.

One member of the audience mentioned that two huge economic collapses occurred after Republican presidents "failed to balance the budget with a 'trickle-down' approach" and asked how Romney addressed these historic examples of failures.

Larson insisted that the government needed to allow the private sector to fix the economy, but clarified that, "Mitt Romney is not George Bush. Mitt Romney is not Herbert Hoover."

The Democrats quickly responded with the question, "if it hasn't worked in the past, why is it going to work in the future?"

They urged the country to look at history and remember how laissez-faire economics allowed risky lending practices causing international recessions.

The conversation of the debate naturally followed to health care and its impact on the economy. Republican representatives insisted that the increased spending necessary for ObamaCare will not reduce the nation's deficit. They further criticized Obama's plan for "disproportionate taxing" and the need to term it "a tax" in order for the Supreme Court to rule it constitutional. Additionally, they claimed that Obama alienated certain groups by passing Obamacare without a single Republican vote.

The Democrats defended Obama, saying that Romney passed a similar bill in Massachusetts. While the Democrats had a majority in both the House and Senate, Obama sought bipartisan support.

Response to the debate was mixed, and while many felt that both groups presented their sides well, a few criticized the Democrats' public speaking.

Max Schnidman '14 agreed, stating "I believe that both sides effectively argued their case, but I think that the Republicans were more able to articulate the failures of President Obama than the Democrats were able to respond to them."

Whether the Democrats or Republicans won the debate, both sides argued important issues that resonated throughout the past year.

Klinkner added, "Hamilton should do more things like this, the debate was a lot of fun."

PHOTO BY ANNA MODEL '16

**Hamilton Democrats and Republicans debate "Should Obama be reelected?"**

# Election app tracks response to presidential debates

by Kaitlin McCabe '16
*News Writer*

Earlier this semester, the Student Activities Office, the Levitt Center, the government department and the Hamilton College Democrats and Republicans sponsored a viewing of the presidential debates in the Sadove Student Center. The purpose of the event was not solely to watch President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney tackle important issues; more importantly, the event encouraged participation, thanks to the use of the interactive smartphone app known as React Labs™.

The app displays a screen upon which participants can express their live reactions to the candidates' comments by pressing buttons during the debate, such as "agree" or "disagree." Additionally, participants could agree that the candidates were "spinning" or "dodging" certain topics.

In the Oct. 4 issue of *The Spectator* earlier this semester discussing the use of React Labs™ at Hamilton College, James S. Sherman Professor of Government Phil Klinkner stated, "First, the novelty of responding to debate via a smartphone app might encourage people to participate who otherwise might not. Second, having the data on how Hamilton students responded to the debate might give us better insight into the attitudes of Hamilton students."

These hopes were undeniably fulfilled during all three of the presidential debate viewings in Sadove. The smart phone app provided the government department with various statistics of interest regarding students' party identifications, voting intentions and thoughts about candidates' stances on certain issues.

"My hope is that the app made people more engaged during the debate rather than overwhelmed"
—*Sarah Larson '15*

The surveys showed that approximately 73 percent of the Hamilton students who participated identified themselves as Democrats, while 22 percent considered themselves to be Republican. Similarly, of those students planning to vote, 75 percent were confident that they would vote for Obama, whereas 18 percent of the students were inclined to vote Romney.

Another interesting feature of the application is that it revealed student responses to the candidate's respective comments. During

*see App, page 4*

# Kirkland ballot: Local elections in Oneida county

by Julia Grace Brimelow '14
*News Editor*

The below image is a sample ballot for the town of Kirkland to familiarize students with the political landscape of the surrounding central New York area.

Come Nov. 6, those voting in Kirkland will choose between these candidates to fill national, regional and local positions.

New York, typically a blue state, does send Republicans to Washington. This election season, the incumbent Republican Congressional Representative Richard L. Hanna is running for reelection against Democratic challenger Dan Lamb to represent the 22nd Congressional District. Other Republicans on this ballot include Kenneth Blankenbush, the candidate running unopposed for a seat in the New York State Assembly, representing the 117th district.

In the U.S. Senate, incumbent Democrat Kirsten E. Gillibrand, who filled the seat vacated by Hillary Rodham Clinton in 2009 after her appointment as Secretary of State, is running for reelection against Republican challenger, Wendy Long.

Other elected positions on the ballot include the State Senator for the 53rd district, a State Assembly member for the 117th district and the Kirkland town clerk.

For more information on the upcoming local elections and to access the results post election day, visit http://ocgov.net/election.

| OFFICE | 2 United States Senate (Vote for One) | 3 Representative in Congress 22nd Congressional District (Vote for One) | 4 New York State Senate 53rd District (Vote for One) | 5 New York State Member of Assembly 117th District (Vote for One) | 6 Kirkland Town Clerk (Vote for One) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DEMOCRATIC A | Kirsten E. Gillibrand 2A | Dan Lamb 3A | David J. Valesky 4A | | |
| REPUBLICAN B | Wendy Long 2B | Richard L. Hanna 3B | | Kenneth Blankenbush 5B | Caryl A. Galinski 6B |
| CONSERVATIVE C | Wendy Long 2C | | | Kenneth Blankenbush 5C | |
| WORKING FAMILIES D | Kirsten E. Gillibrand 2D | | David J. Valesky 4D | | |
| INDEPENDENCE E | Kirsten E. Gillibrand 2E | Richard L. Hanna 3E | David J. Valesky 4E | Kenneth Blankenbush 5E | |
| GREEN F | Colia Clark 2F | | | | |
| LIBERTARIAN H | Chris Edes 2H | | | | |
| CONSTITUTION COMMON SENSE I | John Mangelli 2I | | | | |

# Election think tank offers insight

by Kevin Welsh '15
*News Contributor*

With a bit more than a week until the election, the Levitt Center dedicated last Friday's Think Tank to the 2012 presidential race.

Professor of Government Phil Klinkner gave the short talk, framing the election in terms of critical short term issues with a direct impact on this election, and some longer-term issues that he expects will play out beyond Nov. 6.

"Most voters come into elections with a clear idea of who they will vote for already," Klinkner said, "and if they aren't, it's the economy that will sway them one way or the other. But, it's the economic situation from earlier in the year, not the situation this week or this month, that voters are basing their opinions off of."

Klinkner supports the idea that voters base their opinion of candidates off of perceived change in their individual quality of life under the incumbent. But, he contented, voters tend to look back only six months, maybe a year. People think in the short term about the economy, so despite the questionable performance of President Obama's economic plan in the beginning of his term, the current improvement in the economy will be what matters most to voters. The economy's improvement in recent months will reflect well on Obama in a way that might sway voters to his camp.

In discussing the long term, Professor Klinkner described a demographic issue that is facing the Republican party. Currently, the Republican party has a large bloc of older voters. While attempts have been made to bring Latino voters over to the Republican party, such attempts have, by most accounts, failed. The party is now faced with a voting bloc that is increasingly aging out.

In contrast, Democrats have taken younger voters and the majority of both Black and Latino voters to their side, assuring the party a long future of committed voters, even if their short term goals do not pan out.

Professor Klinkner also made note of the increasing polarization of the party platforms, suggesting that both sides will move the United States election into a new era of campaigning. Typically a campaign either seeks to convince new, independent voters to vote for a specific party, or tries to "activate" those voters who are already committed to a given party, but need a reminder to go out and vote. As the parties become more polarized, Klinker said, it will be harder to sway independents and "partisan activation" will become a central feature of successful campaigns.

When asked about who may win the election, Klinkner was coy. He did admit that President Obama currently had a slight lead in the polls and looked to be the winner, but he said he wouldn't be surprised if Romney pulls ahead.

If you're interested in joining the government department for a spirited election party next Tuesday feel free to stop by Sadove for the nail biting conclusion to a so far riveting election season. And if for no other reason, you can come see Professor Klinkner "geek out on election returns" as they come in live.

PHOTO BY GRETHA SUAREZ '15

**James S. Sherman Professor of Government Phil Klinkner leads think tank.**

## Election app inspires student engagement

*from* **App**, *page 3*

first presidential debate held on Oct. 3, the average participant agreed with President Obama thirteen times but disagreed with him twice. Students additionally believed that he both spun and dodged a topic one time each. For Romney, the participants typically agreed with Romney six times and disagreed eight times. Further, they believed that the candidate spun the issue four times and dodged a topic once.

By the end of the three debates, participating students agreed with Obama 86 times, disagreed 60 times, believed he spun a question 18 times, and thought he dodged issues seven times. Students agreed with Romney 107 times, disagreed with him 61 times, thought he spun an issue 33 times, and dodged a topic 18 times.

In general, those Hamilton students that viewed the Presidential Debates while participating in the React Labs™ experiment were extremely impressed with the program. Sarah Larson, president of the Hamilton Republicans, says, "I thought the app was very innovative…My hope is that the app made people more engaged during the debate rather than overwhelmed and that as a result of their engagement viewers use the debates to challenge their ingrained assumptions about each candidate. Hopefully then voters will be more knowledgeable and confident about their choice in November."

# Hamilton alumni fight for seats in Washington

by Brian Sobotko '16
*News Writer*

Come November 6, two former residents of the Hill, Christie Vilsack K'72 and Matt Cartwright '83, will try to secure a place on Capitol Hill.

Christie Vilsack (D), wife of Secretary of Agriculture and Hamilton graduate Tom Vilsack '72, is a congressional candidate in Iowa's 4th district. Vilsack faces the five-term Republican incumbent Steve King in her first ever political campaign. According to internal polling released by Vilsack's campaign on Oct 26, Congressman King narrowly leads Vilsack 48-46. This polling shows a large shift from the beginning of the campaign, in May 2011, when, according to Vilsack's campaign, King led by 16 points.

The 2012 election marks Vilsack's first attempt to hold public office. Following graduation, Vilsack taught middle school and high school Language Arts and journalism. She earned a master's degree in journalism from the University of Iowa in 1992 and worked as a reporter and columnist for *Mount Pleasant News*.

BLOGS.DESMOINESREGISTER.COM

**Christie Vilsack K'72 is on the Congressional ballot in Iowa.**

"Running for Congress for the first time at age 62 is risky, but Kirkland College prepared me to be a strong, independent leader and I have proven that I am ready for the challenge," Vilsack contends.

While serving as First Lady of Iowa from 1999-2007, Vilsack advocated family literacy and created a statewide literacy initiative. Most recently, she served as Executive Director of The Iowa Initiative, which "aims to reduce the high rate of unintended pregnancies among Iowa women ages 18-30 through networking, research and public outreach."

"I am running for Congress to make sure that our kids can live, work, and raise their children in small town and cities across Iowa's 4th District…in Iowa, we need to work harder not to measure the success of how far away our kids go from home, but instead make sure that there are jobs and economic opportunities in the small communities they grew up in," Vilsack says.

Matt Cartwright (D) of Moosic, PA, a candidate in Pennsylvania's 17th district, appears poised for victory after challenging 10-term incumbent Tim Holden in the primary. Holden, a more conservative Democrat, opposed the Affordable Care Act and climate change legislation. Cartwright campaigned against Holden's moderate voting record in the newly redistricted area.

"We are in a good place. We are moving in the right direction with momentum" Cartwright said when asked about the climate of his race. In the final week of the campaign Cartwright will debate his opponent, Laureen Cummings, twice more. Cartwright noted that his four debates will be more than voters saw from President Obama and Governor Romney.

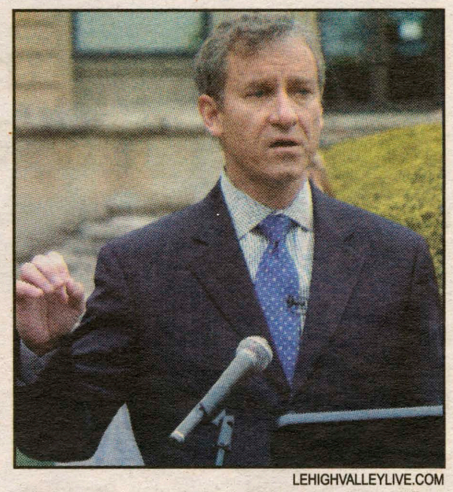
Matt Cartwright's official website points out that he is "not a career politician." Following graduation, he attended University of Pennsylvania's Law School and earned a Juris Doctorate in 1986. For 24 years, Cartwright has worked as an attorney with Munley, Munley and Cartwright, where he has fought "for the middle class and for working families against corporations, insurance companies, big banks and corporate greed." According to Cartwright public service has always interested him.

"I have always had an idea about entering public service. I consider it an honorable thing to do and I think Congress could use more honorable people," Cartwright said when asked what motivated him to run. Cartwright also speaks passionately about a number of issues that affect Americans today.

"It is hard to rank them in terms of importance because there are many things that I feel strongly about." Cartwright largely defends the middle class, a group he feels is "under assault." He criticizes tax policies designed to give the upper class tax breaks at the expense of middle class Americans.

Another issue prevalent in the campaign is the environment. In an earlier debate, Cartwright was asked if he would have voted for cap and trade legislation and he said he would support it.

"Global warming is not a hoax. It's not something that should be taken lightly. Trashing the environment is not the way to grow your economy," Cartwright contends.



LEHIGHVALLEYLIVE.COM

**Matt Cartwright '83 is running for Congress in Pennsylvania.**

The former history major at Hamilton credits his education with giving him perspective. "When studying history you get a sense for who are the people who are principled".

Both candidates emphasize education as an important issue. "Keeping dollars for public education is a key," Cartwright explains. He identifies public education as "the ladders by which people escape poverty to get to the middle class and the ladders by which people go from the middle class to achieve the American dream."

"I know what a difference a good education can make to someone's future. I think I'm a good example of the types of women that Kirkland College produced and believe that everyone deserves a good education. In Congress, I will work tirelessly to support education, work hard to create job opportunities and rebuild our middle class," Vilsack promises.

## 2012 ELECTION ISSUE

The 2012 election is a pivotal moment in our nation's political history. Crucial issues have been brought to the table by each party's candidates, and it is finally time to put our democratic powers to use. Election Day is right around the corner. On Tuesday, November 6, citizens across the country will rush to their district polling places to cast their votes in a divisive political battle.

For most Hamilton students, this is the first presidential election in which we are eligible to participate. *The Spectator* has dedicated this entire issue to the election, as it relates to Hamilton and the community at large. Each of our sections has put the election into its respectable context to inform our community of some of the lesser known facts about the candidates and their relation to the Hamilton community.

Though *The Spectator* rarely deviates from its usual coverage of on-campus events, we decided that the upcoming election was too important to push to the inside pages of some of this semester's issues. We wanted to present as much information as possible, so we waited until the last issue before the election to present you with our official election issue.

A great deal of the production of this issue required the help of our readers, and to those who participated, we send our greatest thanks. At times, however, this reliance on readership-participation proved difficult, as e-mail apathy led to a low response rate to our all-campus election poll (see our front page article for the results).

On our college campus, a lot of the voting has already been processed, as postal absentee ballots are the primary method of voting for college students (see page 6 for more information on early voting). For those students who have yet to send in their ballots, we encourage you to do so promptly.

This issue hopes to bring to the table the wide range of political opinions on this campus, while also highlighting the strong liberal lean common to most liberal arts communities. For an article on the conservative culture on our campus, see page 11. We did not forget about the perspective of the third-party. For more information about libertarianism, see page 10.

Though next week we will return to our usual content, we encourage readers to continue participating in *The Spectator* by sending letters to the editor to spec@hamilton.edu or add your comments to the new comment feature on *The Spectator* website (www.hamilton.edu/spectator). We at *The Spectator* hope that you enjoy our election issue, and that it helps to inform your decision in the 2012 election.

***The Spectator* editorial represents the opinions of the majority of the editorial board. It is not necessarily unanimously agreed upon.**

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## Letters to the Editor Policy

*The Spectator's* Letter to the Editor section is designed to be a forum for the entire Hamilton community to discuss and debate campus, local, national and global issues. Pieces published in the section express the opinion of the individual writers and are not necessarily the opinions of *The Spectator*, its editors or the Media Board.

Letters to the Editor are welcome from all students, alumni/ae, faculty, friends of the college and Hamilton community members.

*The Spectator* has the following policies for submission:

1. Submissions are due by 10:00 p.m. on the Monday before publication. The editors reserve the right to refuse any late submissions.
2. Letters should be no longer than 500 words. The editors reserve the right to cut off letters at 500 words.
3. Letters submitted anonymously will not be printed.
4. The Spectator reserves the right not to publish any letter it deems inappropriate for publication.
5. If a piece is determined to be libelous, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, or an unnecessary and/or unwarranted ad hominem or personal attack, it will not be published.


## About Us

*The Hamilton College* Spectator, *publication number USPS 612-840, is published weekly by the Hamilton College Student Media Board while classes are in session. Subscriptions are $60 per year. For more information about subscriptions e-mail spec@hamilton.edu. Our offices are located on the second floor of the Sadove Student Center. The deadline for advertisements is Monday the week of publication. For further information, please e-mail specads@hamilton.edu.*

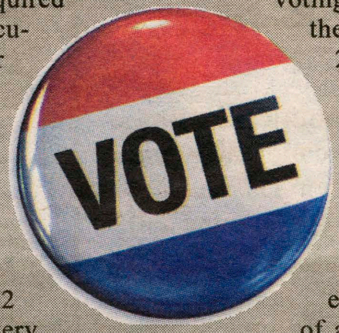
# The story behind your absentee ballot

by Keith MacArtney '13
*Managing Editor*

For the past month or so, the staff at our Hamilton College Mail Center has doubled as ballot distributors and collectors, as Hamilton students dutifully cast their votes in the 2012 election. According to Mail Center employee Alyssa Hopper '13, "It is nice to see so many people making an effort to vote."

Considering most residents of the Hill do not live within a reasonable distance to return home to their districts' polling places, absentee ballots are the primary method of voting for us college students in central New York. Unless of course a student's permanent residence is located within a reasonable distance for a quick trip to the polls, Hamilton students are not likely to return home for Election Day, especially since classes remain in session. The most likely solution to this distance dilemma is the mail-in absentee ballot.

Throughout recent elections, the states have dramatically liberalized laws behind the absentee voting process. For many past elections, most states required voters to provide a documented cause for their absence, which was primarily defined as illness or disability. Applicable rationale did not include students studying at distant colleges and universities. In the 2012 election, however, every state has offered an early voting option. Some states allow "in person" early voting; however, others choose to limit this option to postal ballots. Some states, including Oregon and Washington, now rely primarily on mail-in ballots. These states have recognized that it would be a disservice to our nation's democratic ideals to forsake the option for early voting.

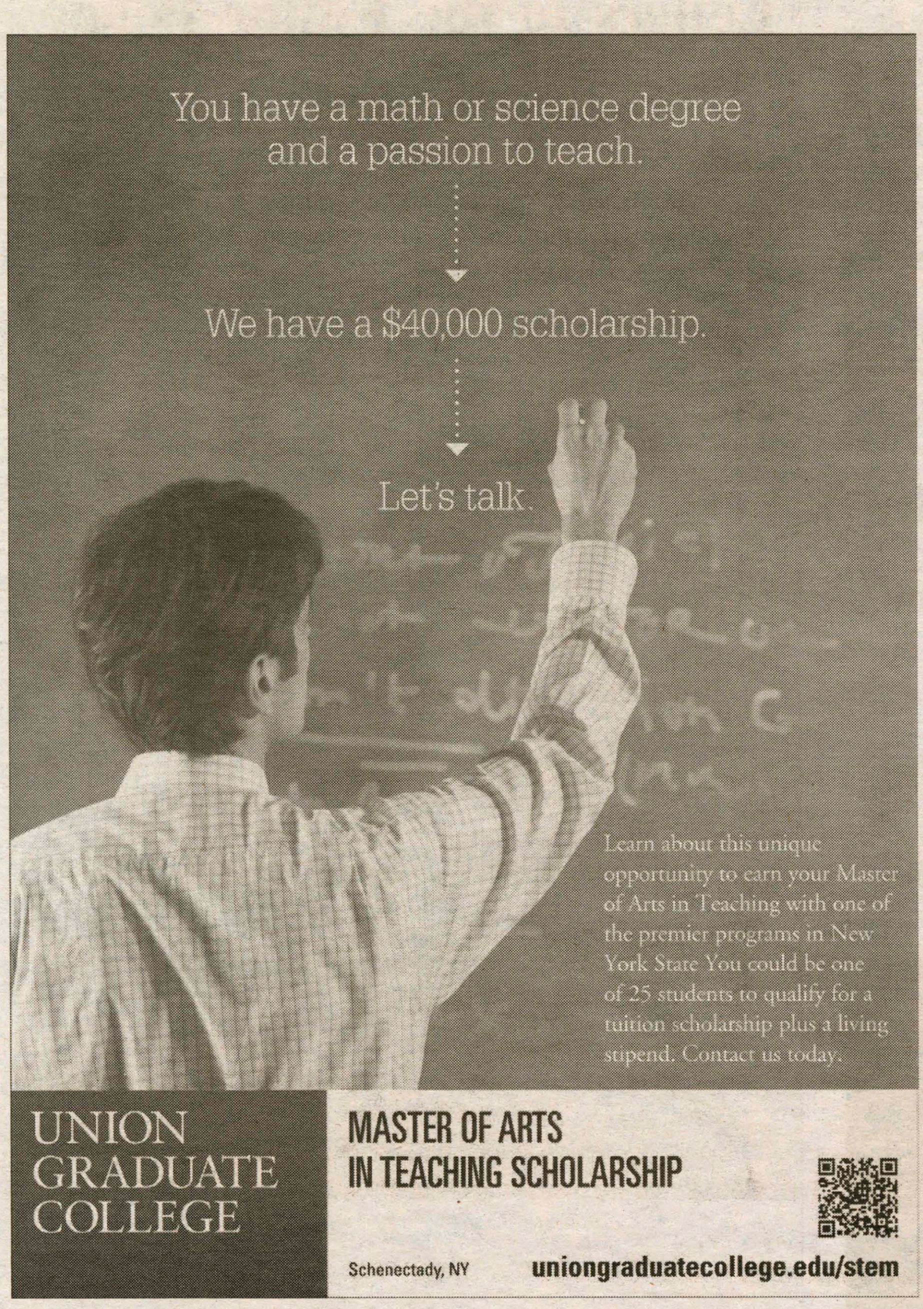


After all, the liberalization of absentee voting laws has worked toward increased voter turnout throughout the United States. A study by Dr. Michael McDonald of George Mason University's Department of Public and International Affairs demonstrates the significant impact of increased early voting. McDonald wrote, "In the presidential election of 2008, approximately 39.7 million or 30% of all votes were cast prior to Election Day, November 4, 2008. This is a significant increase from 20% in 2004 and part of the upward trend experienced since 1992, when 7% of all votes were cast early."

Additionally, mail-in voting is an option for international students who wish to participate in politics abroad. Many countries throughout the world have also worked to increase democratic participation through alternative voting methods.

There is, however, a negative side to early voting, despite our nation's increased reliance on the option. Many rightfully question the legitimacy of an absentee vote compared to that of a vote cast in person on Election Day. A great deal of absentee ballots are not counted in many of the states, especially those received after the official Election Day. While the country does not officially bring vote counting to a close until ten days after Election Day, many states opt to stop counting absentee ballots once a clear winner is defined. For swing states whose electoral winner is not always as clear as in predominantly red or blue states, it becomes more necessary to conduct a full count of absentee ballots to determine the true winner. Even so, there is no guarantee that a vote cast via absentee ballot will hold as much bearing as those via Election Day ballots.

Regardless of the possible downsides to early voting, for those of us whose only voting option is an absentee ballot, it is an essential duty as young American citizens to vote for our nation's leaders. With this in mind, we must also take the time to thank our Mail Center staff for their increased efforts during election season. Without their help, our strong political voices would not be heard.

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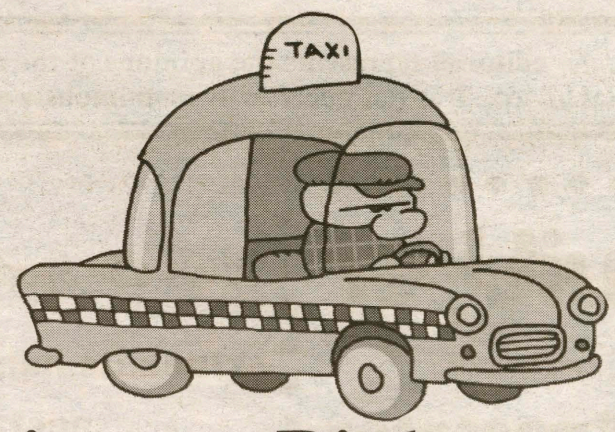


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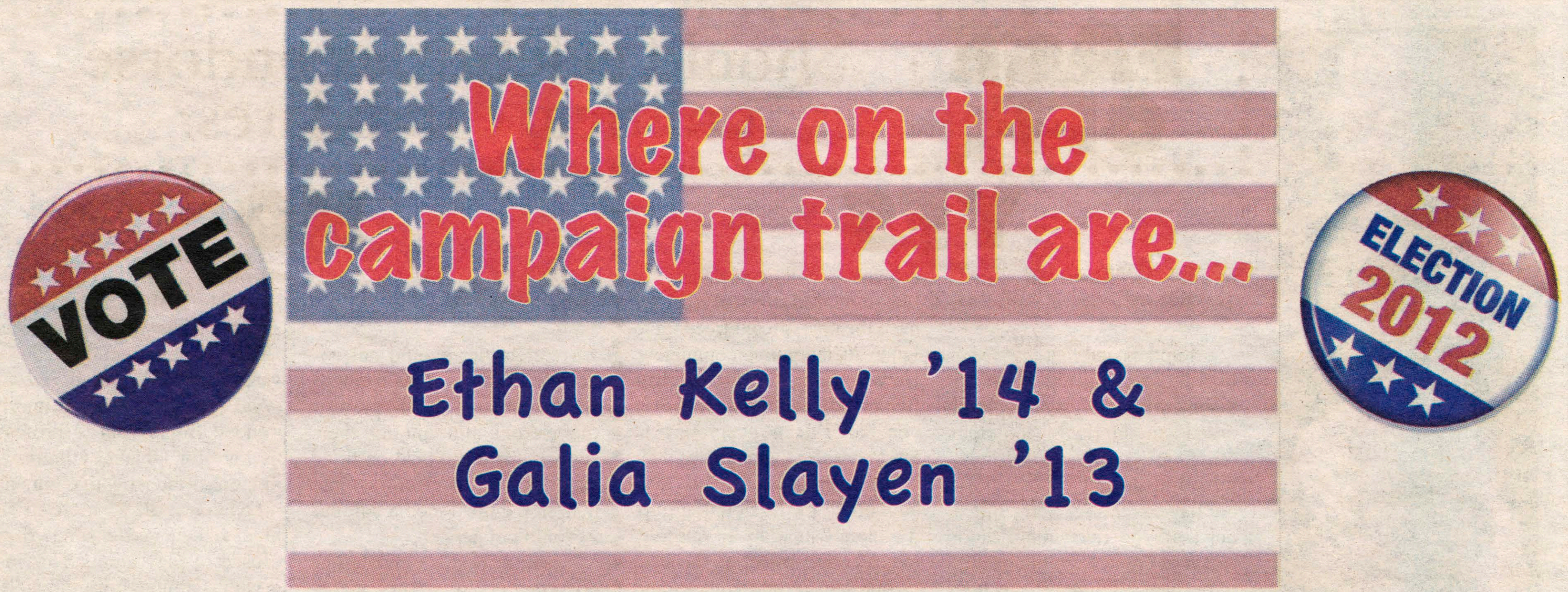



by Ethan Kelly '14
*Feautres Contributor*

While in recent years I have discovered a new love of politics, the extent of my knowledge did not reach far beyond what I learned on "The Daily Show" four nights a week. Now don't get me wrong, Jon Stewart is surprisingly informative, but my knowledge was somewhat limited by simply following this show. So, when I received a chance to work on the Obama Presidential Campaign for the semester, I jumped at the opportunity.

With my bags packed, I hit the road for Iowa in early August. After the two-day journey from upstate New York, I arrived in Des Moines and began working on the campaign as a Press Intern. Not really knowing what to expect, I just hoped my job would entail more than memorizing coffee orders. Instead, my internship began with the arduous task (and one I continue to do) of compiling clips pertinent to the campaign every day. As the days and weeks progressed, my job began to expand—drafting press releases and letters to the editor, pitching interviews and events to local media outlets and even staffing campaign surrogates as they travelled to and throughout the state (pretty sure I know half the Massachusetts House by now)—easily dispelling my initial worries.

Although I did not entirely know what to expect when I set foot into the campaign office on day one, 86 days away from the election, my experience has been more than I could have ever hoped. Not only has it been incredibly educational, but I now have a new understanding of how the political process works as well.

Since setting foot in Iowa, I have seen the president speak, heard Bruce Springsteen perform, met congressmen and celebrities alike, had an opportunity to speak with Secretary of Agriculture and Hamilton alum Tom Vilsack and even had lunch with Rashida Jones (probably the best day ever). In so many ways this has been an incredible internship, made even better by the fact that I am helping to reelect President Obama, an exciting feat on its own. This has truly been a memorable experience and Nov. 6 cannot get here fast enough.

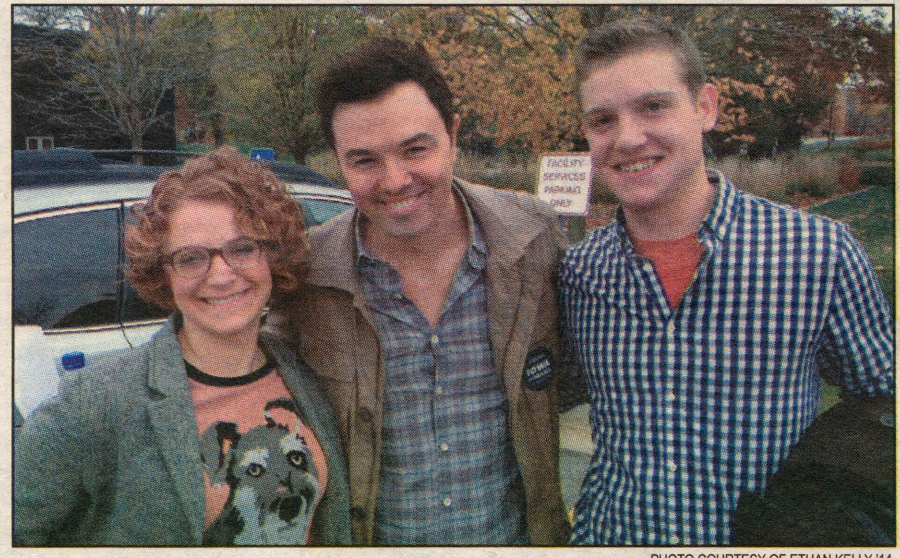


PHOTO COURTESY OF ETHAN KELLY '14

**Ethan Kelly '14 (right) with the Communications Director in Iowa Erin Seidler (left) and Family Guy creator Seth MacFarlane (center).**

by Galia Slayen '13
*Feautres Contributor*

After spending the year abroad in Beijing and Washington D.C., I've had the opportunity to spend my fall semester working for Christie Vilsack, Kirkland '72, in Iowa. Since June, I have been living in Ames, Iowa and working on Christie's campaign for US Congress and we're working hard everyday to help Christie as she attempts to make history.

Christie would be the first-ever female to represent the state of Iowa in higher office, as Iowa and Mississippi are the two remaining states that have never elected a woman to the House, Senate or Governor's office. Christie would also be the first-ever female representative from Hamilton College.

As deputy communications director, I work closely with the communications director on all issues related to press. My primary responsibilities include managing our online website (www.ChristieVilsackForIowa.com), running all of our social media efforts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and shooting photography and video for the campaign. I also spend a lot of time on the road with Christie, traveling to small towns and cities across the 4th District while on the campaign trail.

Christie is running against a five-term incumbent and with a Republican voter advantage in the newly redrawn 4th District, many believed Christie's chances were a long shot. But in Kirkland/Hamilton spirit, Christie is putting up a strong fight and we are now in a dead heat. It is my hope that in less than a week, both Iowa and Hamilton College will have the privilege of calling Christie Vilsack their first-ever Congresswoman.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GALIA SLAYEN '13

**Galia Slayen '13 was lucky enough to meet former President Bill Clinton.**

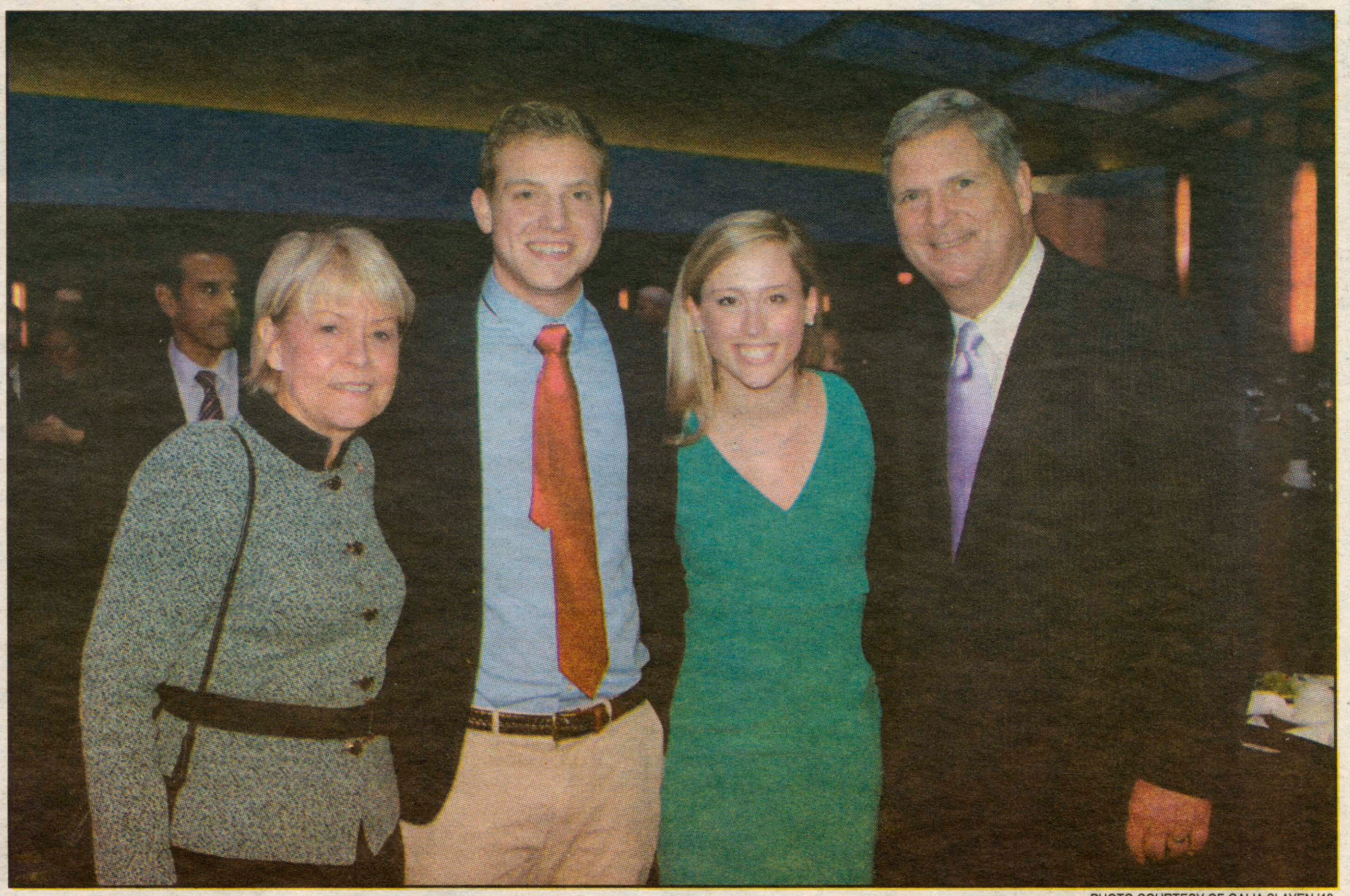
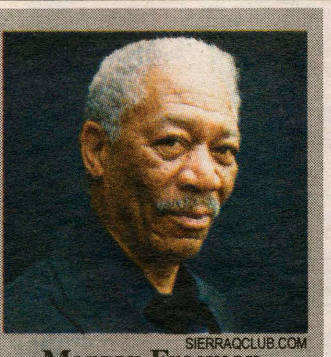


PHOTO COURTESY OF GALIA SLAYEN '13

**Candidate for U.S. Congress Christie Vilsack K'72, current students Ethan Kelly '14 and Galia Slayen '13 and current U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack '72 at the annual Democratic Party dinner in Iowa.**

November 1, 2012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**Morgan Freeman for Barack Obama**

EONLINE.COM
**Lady Gaga for Barack Obama**

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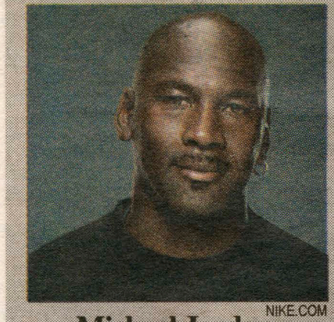
**Jon Bon Jovi for Barack Obama**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**Michael Jordan for Barack Obama**

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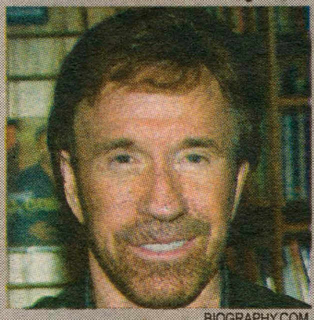
**Lindsey Lohan for Mitt Romney**


BIOGRAPHY.COM
**Chuck Norris for Mitt Romney**

# FACE OFF: Should celebrities endorse political candidates?

## YES

**by Jack McManus '13**
*Arts & Entertainment Editor*

I understand that this seems like the less logical side of this argument in some ways—celebrities are stupid, right? Don't they represent the rampant superficiality and misguided value system of our flawed culture? Some might, but that's an oversimplification that robs credit from the handful of brilliant celebrity intellectuals that really do deserve it. It's easy to deride famous people for their socially-constructed status, but, based merely on the fact that they often have an attentive audience, these people have abilities that the vast majority of us undeniably do not. Every time a famous person performs, records, shoots, tweets or makes an appearance, their influence reaches thousands of adoring fans (sometimes known as eligible voters), a valuable asset that even the candidates themselves can't always match. Whether they deserve this power or not, it exists regardless, and many celebrities take the associated responsibilities very seriously.

As Americans like the rest of us, most musicians, actors and other celebrities feel strongly about how our nation is governed, and, accordingly, they side with candidates that best represent their views and interests. While we all exercise our power by voting, celebrities have the added ability to shape our nation's government by endorsing a candidate, theoretically influencing their fans' voting habits. As long as they're motivated by the genuine desire to make America the strongest nation it can be, I don't have any problem with them exerting this power over their available, largely consenting audience. Ordinary people do the same thing when they post about their chosen candidate on Facebook, slap a sticker on their car or stab a sign into their front yard—we're all just trying to help our own interests get fulfilled. We'd all like to make a difference; the difference is celebrities can. Especially for performing artists, the act of political endorsement also runs the risk of alienating sects of their fans, but if they're willing to take that risk, we should commend them for valuing their beliefs and our country's well-being over their own popularity and economic interests.

While I fully believe everything stated above, I admit that my argument is complicated by my use of "celebrity" as a comprehensive term. We can all agree that there's an ocean of difference between thoughtful, conscientious artists and the inexplicably popular Kardashian/Jersey Shore end of the celebrity spectrum. While I don't fundamentally object to the latter group making political statements and endorsements, I'd like to remind everyone that we have the unrestricted freedom to ignore their opinions completely. However, in the case of true artists (which you can define however you like), I'd urge everyone to at least consider the merits of their political opinions. More so than any other professional group, it's the artists' duty to observe, interpret and reflect on the state of our society and culture, and the best ones carry out those duties respectably. Listen closely to Pink Floyd's *The Wall* if you don't understand what I mean (it may seem so, but you'll just have to trust that I'm not being cliché with this recommendation). Artists often delve into our society's issues more deeply than most of us are equipped or prepared to, and that informs their political decisions drastically. Putting aside the fact that I enjoy their music, I've heard both Roger Waters and Bruce Springsteen speak at length about the role of government, the importance of personal freedom and the way governments do, don't and ought to respect human rights and lives, and their intellect convinced me of their credible knowledge about matters of national importance, including elections. True artists should earn our trust in this way; it's their job to do so.

One can complain all day about the dangers of celebritocracy and our society's misplaced admiration of the rich, talented and beautiful, but it's a foregone conclusion that these types have a certain amount of power over how our society functions. While some may not be trustworthy, others have proven the legitimacy of their ideas and deserve to be considered worthy sources of political influence. Of course, we all have the right to vote however we choose, but the health of our nation depends on our ability to enter the voting booth with a clear heart and educated mind, and anything that helps that process should be welcomed.

## NO

**by Taylor Coe '13**
*Creative Director*

Celebrities should not endorse candidates. This is not to say that anyone should prevent them from announcing their support for a political party or candidate in an election—just that, in the ideal media culture, it would not happen.

But, at best, candidate endorsements are empty statements, anyway. See the Democratic reaction following Clint Eastwood's awkward entrance onto the stage at the Republican National Convention in Tampa.

PHOTO BY LYNNE SLADKY | AP PHOTO
**Clint Eastwood addressed our invisible president.**

Sure, having Clint behind your cause is more than just chump change, but his appearance as mystery speaker heralded a collective, Democratic sigh of relief, crossing off their list the predicted heavyweights, which ran the gamut from Sarah Palin to a hologram Ronald Reagan. Eastwood and his empty stool ended up being a relief to the Democrats and a mind-boggling gaffe for the Republicans.

But one cannot dismiss celebrity endorsements wholesale. Like Eastwood's remarkable gaffe, they end up playing an important (but misleading) role in elections. Sometimes it is even the case that celebrities indirectly make endorsements by way of 'anti-endorsements.' With regard to popular musicians and their music, we see this circus routine played out nearly every year with candidates' choice of campaign songs and even their references to popular culture.

Reagan, for instance, was famously lambasted by Bruce Springsteen for his misinterpretation of "Born in the U.S.A."—a song which bemoans the experience of a Vietnam vet. A few election cycles later, Jackson Browne sued John McCain and the Republican Party in 2008 for the use of "Running on Empty" in a commercial for the Ohio Republican Party. (It should be noted that neither approved the use of the song).

In the past election cycle of celebrity endorsement, there was perhaps no moment more awkward than that in which *Rolling Stone* reporter Mikal Gilmore prodded Bob Dylan to profess his love for Obama. Gilmore's odd, quasi-interrogative pursuit of Dylan was all the more striking in that the master songwriter refused to play along. This interview—although it ultimately yielded no official endorsement—nevertheless manages to indirectly highlight the crucial distinction between art and artist.

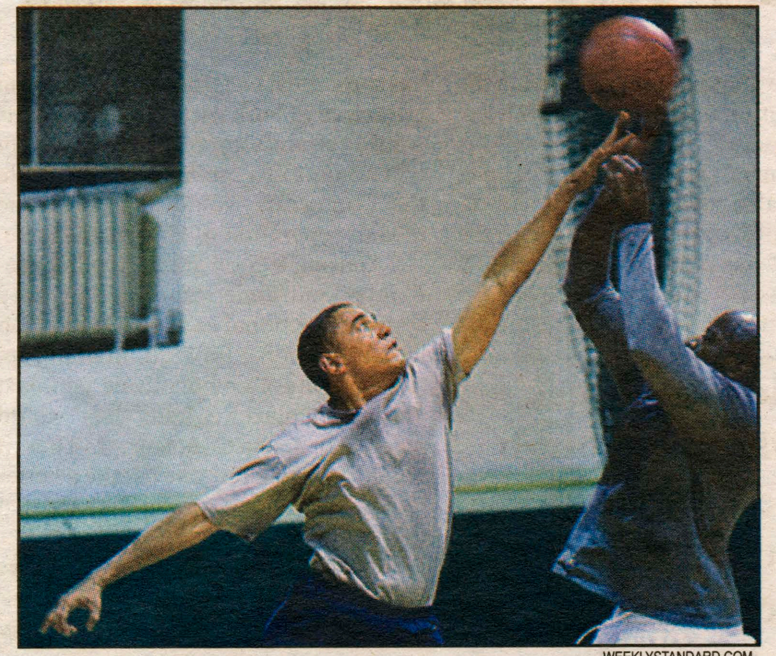
Dylan, of course, assumed a voice of political change in the 1960s during the Civil Rights movement, but that role was largely assigned to him by his listeners—it was not one that he picked for himself. Gilmore seemed to be under the impression that Dylan's endorsement of Obama would somehow situate itself alongside his earlier forms of political expression.

Art can often be political in a curious way: it is not political in the way that a stump speech or an op-ed in the newspaper is political. Politics in art is not straightforward. Even art that deals directly with political subjects still is only capable of addressing politics in a glancing manner. The line here between fact and fiction is crucial. You only need to watch the neatly-plotted political drama of Aaron Sorkin in relation to the endlessly complex and layered world of national politics to get the point.

On the other side of the issue, celebrity endorsement can needlessly politicize apolitical art. When Sean Penn endorses Obama, he inflects a certain political flavor into a film like *The Tree of Life*, which ultimately speaks to a more complicated relation to politics than Vote for Change. Ultimately, this politicization is an unintended consequence, but we cannot pretend that these consequences are not sometimes felt.

So, at the end of the day, who should be making endorsements? If we (idealistically) end up with silenced actors, artists and all the above famous-for-being-famous, then who does that leave us? Well—people whose thoughts matter in a more than cursory, popular way: politicians, journalists, newspapers, thinkers, activists. These are people who impact the political sphere in more ways than simply their 'endorsement.' While it is undeniable that certain celebrities (think: not Paris Hilton) can grapple in interesting and intelligent ways with our current political climate, their opinions should not be spoken in the same breath as those of Colin Powell or Bill Clinton.

# PRESIDENTIAL KNOCKOUT


WEEKLYSTANDARD.COM

## Barack Obama

PRESIDENT | 6'1", 175 lbs | Democrat
Birth Date: Aug. 4, 1961 (Age: 51)
High School Sport: Basketball
College: Columbia University
Season Highlights: Passed Obamacare, Repealed Don't Ask, Don't Tell
Largest Sports Donor: L.A. Dodgers, $180,000
Sports Team: Chicago Bulls
Experience: NCAA Bracketologist, Daughters' basketball coach

## Joe Biden

VICE PRESIDENT | 6'0", 175 lbs | Democrat
Birthdate: Nov. 20, 1942 (Age: 69)
High School Sport: Football
College: University of Delaware
Achievements: Implemented American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Elected to Senate at age 29

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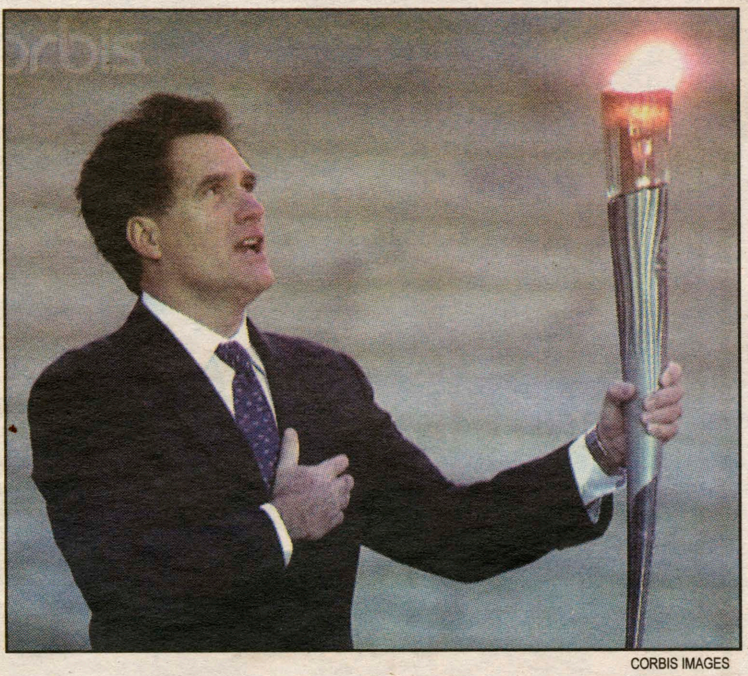
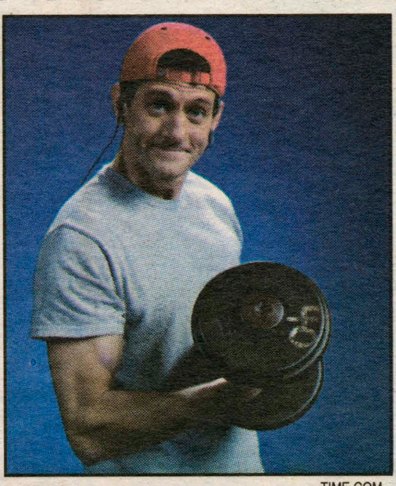

CORBIS IMAGES

## Mitt Romney

CANDIDATE | 6'2", 197 lbs | Republican
Birthdate: March 12, 1947 (Age: 65)
High School Sports: Cross Country
College: Brigham Young University
Season Highlights: Former Governor of Massachusetts, Strong Debate Performances
Largest Sports Donor: Atlanta Braves, $157,500
Sports Team: New England Patriots
Experience: Organizer of 2002 Winter Olympics, Owner of Olympic dressage horse, Rafalca

## Paul Ryan

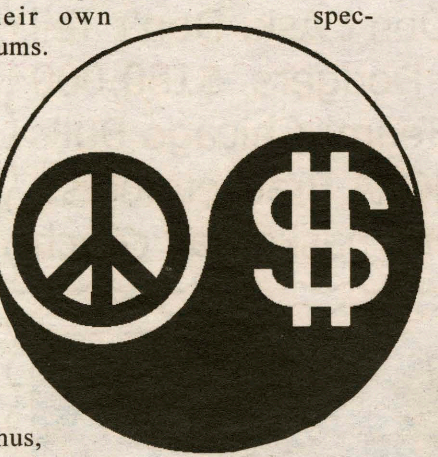
CONGRESSMAN | 6'1", 163 lbs | Republican
Birthdate: Jan. 29, 1970 (Age: 42)
High School Sport: Soccer
College: Miami University
Achievements: Chairman of the House Budget Committee, P90X Enthusiast


TIME.COM

# Third parties offer a unique perspective on national issues, especially the Libertarian

**by Christopher Delacruz '13**
*Opinion Columnist*

The two most popular political lenses which people use to view different issues in this country are the Democratic lens and Republican lens. In light of the ever increasing political polarization of both parties, the Democratic and Republican parties have only grown further apart and to opposite sides of their own spectrums.



Thus, people often don't get the opportunity to view issues from other political lenses and ideologies. Viewing these problems through the eyes of other parties can help give citizens a better understanding of common challenges the nation faces and how to fix them. One such party whose view is becoming important to consider is the Libertarian Party.

The Libertarian Party is the third largest political party in the United States and one of the fastest growing alternative parties in the nation. They are neither categorized as very specifically left or very specifically right. Certain policies of the Libertarians can be more left than that of the Democrats while others more right than that of the Republicans. The policies and beliefs of the Libertarians revolve around one very important belief: the belief in minimum government and maximum freedom.

One of the most important social beliefs of the Libertarians is that one should be allowed to live his life however he pleases as long as his actions do not interfere with the rights of other individuals (except in the case of a contractual agreement). Furthermore, the Libertarians believe that the government should have minimal involvement in all parts of society, economy and even international involvement.

Libertarian positions include but are not limited to: minimally regulated market, a less powerful state, strong civil liberties such as support for same-sex marriage, the legalization of marijuana, separation of church and state, open immigration, non-interventionism and neutrality in diplomatic relations, freedom of trade and travel to all foreign countries and a more direct democracy. More recent positions of the Libertarian Party include support for the repeal of NAFTA and CAFA, as well as the United States' exit from the United Nations, WTO and NATO.

Of course, as flawless as this ideology may sound to some people, there are also many problems with it. For example, open immigration in the context of our modern era can pose a problem as no country (not even the United States) has unlimited resources

**"Viewing these problems through the eyes of other parties can help give citizens a better understanding of common challenges the nation faces and how to fix them."**

and every nation has a point when its people begin to feel these limits. Another example is non-interventionism, which is not a new concept and is an idea that has been argued before; however, non-interventionism is not always the best idea, and would not have worked in situations such as the Holocaust or the apartheid in South Africa.

At the same time, Libertarianism has some great benefits that would seem attractive to both parties. Republicans would certainly appreciate the concept of a minimally regulated market while the Democrats would appreciate the idea of separation of church and state.

Getting a good grasp on other ideologies and understanding how they approach national and local issues can help us all move forward. In doing so, we can find commonalities amongst parties in places where they would originally seem to not exist. Thus it would benefit everyone to take a better look at the Libertarian platform and that of other third parties to reach a better understanding of public policy issues and how best to approach them.

*Did you know...*

**Approximately 6 percent of students surveyed by *The Spectator* said they were planning on voting for a candidate other than Barack Obama or Mitt Romney.**

## Who Cares?

Assigning Romney's offspring to fraternities at Hamilton: Matt, AD. Ben, AD. Craig, AD. Josh, AD. Tagg, Chi Psi.

Assigning the candidates to frats: Obama, D Phi. Biden, DKE. Romney, TDX. Ryan, P90X.

The Secret Service: ~~KDO~~. Pentagon.

## Who Cares?

Aggressive Facebook Statuses: no matter how many "likes" you accrue, most sane people hate you.

Aggressive Weather: A week before the election, Sandy? Low blow.

Aggressive Spectator Issues: The most bipartisan news outlet in Clinton now that Hamilton men have started standing up for their rights.

## Who Cares?

The "fiscally conservative, socially liberal" voter: lives in Eells, demands fair trade dirty chai from Opus 1.

The lesser known "fiscally liberal, socially conservative" voter: Occupies Wall Street, is an econ major.

The apathetic voter: No, seriously, who cares?

*by Wynn Van Dusen '15 and Claire Carusillo '13*

**Disclaimer:** The opinions expressed in this column are purely of a satirical nature, and are not representative of the views of *The Spectator* editorial board.

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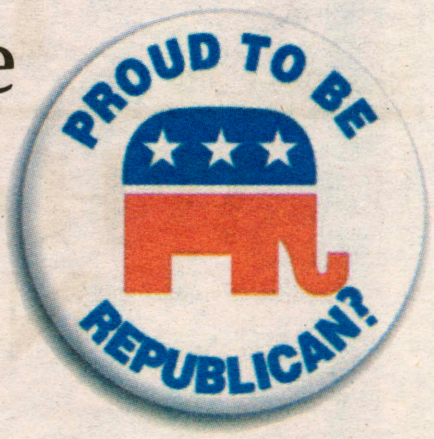
# Republi-WHAT? Conservative voices scarce, stifled on campus




**by Kayla Safran '13**
*Opinion Contributor*

There is no doubt that there is a large liberal majority at Hamilton. Yet most people seem unaware or unconcerned about the negative effects of this lack of political diversity. Hamilton's liberal-dominated political atmosphere not only weakens the quality of our education, but has also led to the widespread stigmatization of conservative and libertarian students.

Our education—our academic experience at Hamilton—is greatly disadvantaged when all the participants agree on political issues. Our debates, arguments and discussions both inside the classroom and out are nowhere near the quality they could be (or should be) because conservative voices are largely not present. How can anyone learn to articulate what they believe if there is no body to challenge them? Are we really learning to think critically and open-mindedly when everyone at the table more or less agrees? Hamilton students who do support liberal-progressive politics are able to grow complacent in their convictions, the many who are more moderate about politics simply learn to accept the Hamilton "norm" and the few conservatives are forced into silence. This situation is deadly for intellectual growth.

Furthermore, because of the lack of intelligent conservative voices on campus, many students leave Hamilton knowing practically nothing about the American political right. Modern American conservatism is incredibly divided—the differences between neoconservatives, traditional conservatives and libertarians are vast. But most Hamilton students (and professors) wouldn't even recognize these distinctions if you named them. Yet many feel comfortable making broad-sweeping negative claims about the Republican Party and conservatives in general. I've heard it all: "Republicans are racist," "Republicans are homophobic," "Republicans hate women." These blanket statements demonstrate a real ignorance about the history of conservative thinking in America, and do nothing to foster intelligent or productive conversation.

While of course everyone is entitled to their own opinions and has the right to speak openly, there is a double standard about political correctness and free speech at Hamilton. While the community is hypersensitive to speech that offends certain marginalized groups, Hamilton generally seems to accept and sometimes even encourage condemnations of conservatives. Higher education everywhere seems to be struggling with this unfair dichotomy; in a piece titled "Feigning Free Speech on Campus," published in the *New York Times* last week, Greg Lukianoff highlighted the many ways in which liberal arts colleges repress free speech. He suggests that in trying to promote civility and "niceness," colleges actually stifle debate, hinder intellectual growth and violate the notion of "free inquiry."

Lukianoff also cites a statistic that speaks perfectly to my final point about the stigmatization of conservative students. In 2010, the American Association of Colleges and Universities found that out of a sample of 24,000 college students only 35.6% strongly agreed that they felt "safe to hold unpopular positions on campus." The problem of an overwhelming liberal majority paired with a politically correct environment is self-perpetuating—even when students with conservative opinions are included in political conversations they often are hesitant to speak up. There are many people at Hamilton who I didn't even know were conservative until this semester, even though I've known them for almost four years, because they had been afraid to reveal themselves as supportive of unpopular positions. The Hamilton culture is so vehemently anti-conservative and anti-Republican that an admission that you're not voting for Obama, for example, precipitates a wave of such harsh judgment that most people would just rather avoid saying anything at all.

At the College Republicans meeting last week, members discussed their experiences as conservatives on the Hamilton campus. Most were much like my own—feeling a general sense of misinformed bias among peers, waiting to "come out" as conservative to friends and constantly being on the defensive about politics. Other stories, however, extended beyond the student body; several students recounted stories about how professors dismissed their opinions in class or even flat out told them that they are wrong for thinking in a certain way. Others had similar experiences with administrators! Publius Virgilus Rogers Professor of American History Robert Paquette, in many ways the only advocate for conservative students left at Hamilton, has recently written about some of the most egregious stories, which reveal the extent and depth of this prejudicial attitude on our campus.

It is simply unacceptable that conservative students are treated this way at a school that prides itself on open-mindedness. The disproportionate number of leftist students and faculty will probably not change in the immediate future, but the Hamilton community can make efforts to change the overwhelmingly anti-conservative attitudes, which it harbors. Talking with members of the Hamilton Democrats in just the last week has encouraged me to believe that this kind of change is possible. If we all make an effort to be more open minded—to consider opposing political views before just dismissing them, and to learn about conservative policies and beliefs before unfairly pigeonholing conservative students—we will all better off intellectually and Hamilton will become a place where students really do learn from each other and how to think for themselves.

# A Bulgarian take on the U.S. presidential election

**by Hristina Mangelova '16**
*Opinion Contributor*

On my way from the Syracuse airport to Hamilton College in August I could not help but notice how many houses had "Obama-Biden" or "Romney-Ryan" signs on their front yards. Bearing in mind that I am from a country where people avoid talking about politics, you can understand why I was struck by seeing how many Americans openly stated their favored candidate for president.

For me, the politically active people, the presidential debates and some of the economic issues the candidates discuss are completely new. However, observing them as an international student has given me new knowledge and a new perspective.

I come from Bulgaria—a parliamentary republic with a prime minister (the most powerful executive position) and a president (the head of the state with the right of veto). The political system I grew up with greatly differs from the government in the USA. As a result I am still having trouble comprehending the fact that the presidential candidate that the majority of the population chooses may not actually become president, if the Electoral College decides so.

I first learned that presidential debates are a part of a pre-election campaign the day before the first Obama-Romney debate in October. I was instantly taken by the idea and could not help but ask myself why we do not have verbal battles in Bulgaria. Even though there are some discussion panels before the Bulgarian elections, they do not have as strict a format as the US debates, which I find fascinating, but are rather all-over-the-place talks without a direct confrontation between the candidates.

I can sincerely say that I barely see any difference between the candidates who claim to know the best path for my country, but lack the skills to explain it. For a person who has little knowledge of US foreign and domestic policy, watching the presidential debates helped me see both sides of many important issues, for example, taxes for middle class families and inequalities for women in the work place.

It also helped me understand that even though Governor Romney is a Republican, he has different priorities than George W. Bush. And I heard what president Obama has done to improve the lives of the Americans in the past four years.

> **"Observing [the presidential debates] as an international student has given me new knowledge and a new perspective."**

I could not help but share with my friends how beneficial I believe the presidential debates are for the voters and what a great influence they have on the final decisions. However, they did not agree with me and said that the debates influence only a handful of people as the majority usually make up their mind long before October.

I considered my friends' words and I can see where they are coming from; political affiliation is influenced by family and demographics. Plus, I am in no position to argue how and when Americans make political decisions.

But I think the debates could be used as a tool to increase voting activity. I saw that the verbal battles between the candidates for US president lead to some intense discussions between supporters of Obama and Romney. But more importantly, those passionate supporters (somewhat extinct in Bulgaria) managed to interest some previously ignorant people who will probably reconsider their vote on Nov. 6 (a miracle I rarely witnessed back home).

People watch the debates for many reasons. Maybe people watch the debates to hear memorable lines such as "binders full of women," maybe they want to vote but have not decided who to support or maybe there are other reasons. Regardless, the debates provoke Americans to take a political stand, and the more involved they are, the more objective their final vote will be.

In the past weeks I was asked several times what would my vote be if I were an American. Each time I felt unease answering not only because I am not used to sharing my political values with acquaintances, rather than friends, but because many of the issues that President Obama, Governor Romney and the American people discuss are unfamiliar to me (gun control, NAFTA, labor unions, debt limits, etc.). I was raised in a country where the drinking age is 18, people are not politically active, there is no death penalty, political campaigns consists of posters and TV ads, euthanasia is illegal and abortion is legal. Now I live in a country where the presidential candidates travel for months to meet people and ask for their votes, face each other and debate the main issues, the drinking age is 21 and my classmates have their political affiliation glued to the back of their laptops. My political horizon is broadening and I could not be happier!

# ELECTION 2012

# WHAT SHOULD BE OUR NEXT PRESIDENT'S TOP PRIORITY?

**Quotes compiled by Phoebe Greenwald '16 and Charlotte Hough '14**

*"I would say unemployment rates, social issues, and education. Employment and education will help to improve the economy by making more jobs and educating people for these jobs. Social issues are also important because they directly affect every single one of us."*

—Jessie Shelton '15

*"Fixing the economy because unemployment is at 7.8% right now, and we still haven't made anything close to a good recovery since 2008."*

—Brian Warager '15

*"Women's reproductive health. It's a very contested issue in the Philippines where I'm from as well, and I honestly believe that since America's political situation is held as an international model, America should set the standard by endorsing gender equality."*

—Kaye Kagaoan '15

*"I obviously think that the economy needs to be the top priority...it's not doing great but it's not as bad as it was when Obama started. I think we need to stay where we're at because it's not going to be fixed in a day and there is a slow recovery."*

—Scott Pillette '14

*"Repealing DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act), protecting women's reproduction rights, and ensuring that a good education is affordable."*

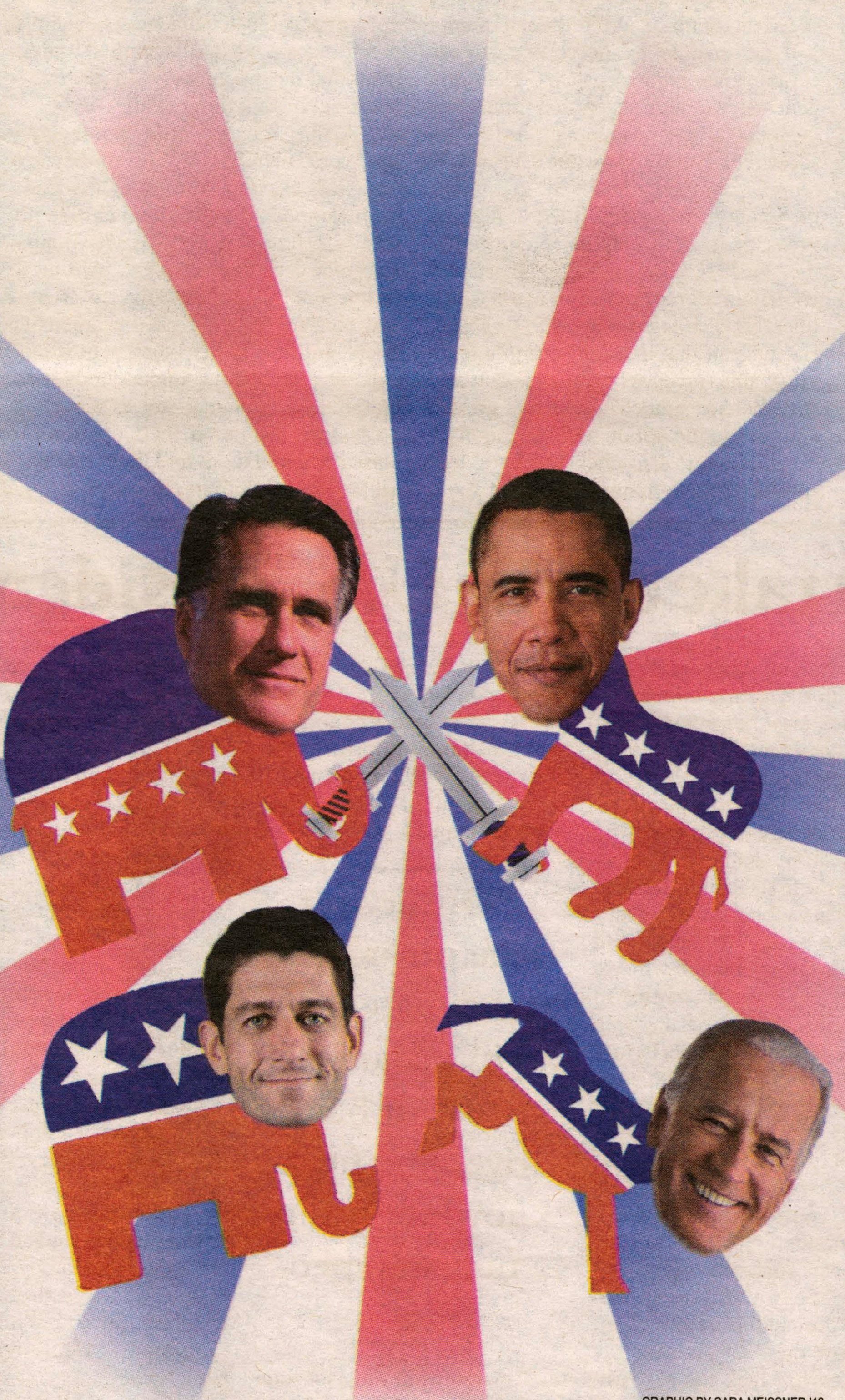
—Grace Murphy '16

*"Restoring the economy, improving job growth and making it easier for kids coming out of college to be employed."*

—Erich Marcks '16

*"Pull out of the pointless war in Afghanistan and go into Syria where we would actually make a difference."*

—Kenny Ratliff '16



GRAPHIC BY SARA MEISSNER '13

*"Stop insurance companies from exploiting people who are forced to buy into them."*

—Mike Gagnon '16

*"Investment in cleaner energy. I mean, have you seen this hurricane?"*

—Alex Hayes '14

*"I'd have to say the unemployment crisis. I feel like it's a priority for me as a college student because when I get out of here I want to make sure that I can make a living on my own instead of being forced to move back in with my parents or settle for anything less."*

—Adja Drame '16

*"The economy, because I'm about to graduate and I want to keep my money."*

—Tom Youngblood '13

*"The president should focus on more rights for women because people keep trying to get rid of abortion. A lot of conservatives make it so women can't be equal to men. For example, women still make less annual income than men and many single mothers are looked down upon for not being married."*

—Sandy Wu '16

*"Health care and education. Without federal funding, public education won't have the resources to have our students compete on an international level. Everyone should have access to health care, and your wealth should not determine that access."*

—Rebecca Gaines '15

*"It depends on which president gets elected, but I would say education and our debt situation are important issues."*

—Helen Santoro '15